

## Champion's Guide to Delivering Information Sessions Native American

*Adapted from Dementia Friends Minnesota and with permission of  
Dementia Friends, Alzheimer's Society, London UK.*

This Champion's Guide is intended for use in Dementia Friends Information Sessions that include Native American<sup>1</sup> participants. Some content in this guide has been adapted to be more culturally relatable.

### Champion Checklist

#### Materials and Resources

- Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook
- Clock or watch to keep track of time and for 20 second activity
- We are Dementia Friends/I am a Dementia Friend signs
- Action Slips
- Optional:
  - Dementia Friends Pins
  - Five Key Messages Video and The River Video (will need access to Internet/YouTube and projector)

### Champion Preparation

- ✓ Read the Dementia Friends Champion's Guide, Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook and all supporting materials.
- ✓ View the Five Key Message Video to determine if you will show the video in Part 6 of 12 – Broken Sentences. The video can be found on ACT's You Tube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oIrRTayLJw>
- ✓ Review Part 7 of 12 in the guide - The River. Determine whether you will read The River or show the video narration of the story. The video can be found on ACT's You Tube page at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qT\\_2CZ89TZY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qT_2CZ89TZY&feature=youtu.be)  
Make contact with the site host to determine whether:
  - The Information Session activities are culturally relevant and appropriate for the group. See Champion Tips in Part 8 of 12 - Everyday Tasks Activity.
  - There is access to a projector and Internet if you're planning to show The Five Key Messages or The River videos.
- ✓ Obtain information on local community resources, including culturally specific resources, to share with participants at the end of the Information Session.

### Dementia Friends Information Session




**Time:** 60 minutes, in-person

**Note:** The following session plan has suggested words in **bold** that you can use in facilitating the information session. Feel free to use your own words to get the message across.




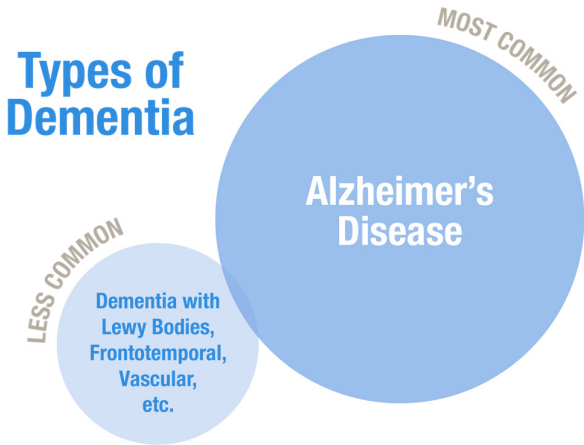
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<sup>1</sup> Although Native American is used to name the intended Dementia Friends audience, it's important to note other culturally preferred names, including American Indians, First Nations, Indigenous, and Natives. Tribes have unique languages, cultures, traditions, and viewpoints, so it's helpful to connect with the local tribe before delivering an Information Session.



## Part 1 of 12 – Welcome

	4 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook
	<p>Distribute the Dementia Friends Information Session workbook to participants. Introduce yourself and welcome participants. Review location of restrooms with participants and remind them to turn off cell phones.</p> <p><b>Say: I am a volunteer [describe your enthusiasm about Dementia Friends]. I completed a training to be a Dementia Friends Champion. I am not an expert in dementia and it is not my role to give advice, so I may not be able to answer all your questions. I can, however, tell you where you can find out more and get any advice or support you need.</b></p> <p><b>Say:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The session will last about 60 minutes.</b></li><li>• <b>After participating in the session, you will be able to describe dementia and know the most common type of dementia. You will understand the five key messages about dementia and learn how to effectively communicate with a person living with dementia.</b></li><li>• <b>Towards the end of the session you will be asked to choose a small action you can take as part of becoming a Dementia Friend today.</b></li></ul>



## Part 2 of 12 – One Word on Dementia

	4 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 1/cover)
	<p><b>Say:</b> In this activity, I'd like for you to share <u>one</u> word that comes to mind when you hear the word "dementia." Is anyone willing to share?</p> <p>Allow participants to answer one at a time, making sure that you repeat their words.</p> <p>Once you have taken 5 – 6 words from the audience, ask:</p> <p><b>Are these words positive or negative?</b></p> <p>Allow the audience to answer. Repeat the words shared. Point out that many of the words people mention may be negative. Fear and loss are often mentioned.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Other types of dementia include Dementia with Lewy Bodies, Frontotemporal, and Vascular. The goal of Dementia Friends is to increase understanding about dementia and reduce stigma.</p> <p>Let participants know that the Types of Dementia graphic can be found in their Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 1/cover).</p>  <p>The graphic consists of two overlapping blue circles. The larger circle on the right is labeled 'Alzheimer's Disease' and 'MOST COMMON'. The smaller circle on the left is labeled 'Dementia with Lewy Bodies, Frontotemporal, Vascular, etc.' and 'LESS COMMON'. The title 'Types of Dementia' is positioned to the left of the circles.</p>




### Part 3 of 12 – What is Dementia Friends?

	2 minutes
	<p>Describe Dementia Friends using or summarizing the bullets below.</p> <p><b>Say:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dementia Friends is a global movement to help everyone understand dementia so that people can live well with dementia and feel part of their community.</b></li><li>• <b>Minnesota was the first state in the United States to offer Dementia Friends.</b></li><li>• <b>We currently have <i>[insert number from Dementia Friends website]</i> Dementia Friends in the U.S.</b></li><li>• <b>The goal is to help everyone in a community understand five key messages about dementia, how it affects people, and how we each can make a difference in the lives of people living with the disease.</b></li><li>• <b>You can help by becoming a Dementia Friend.</b></li></ul>

### Part 4 of 12 – Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer’s Disease

	2 minutes
	<p><b>Say: Most people know that they experience physical changes as they age. They may now wear glasses, have graying hair and feel tight when they get up in the morning. We also experience some thinking skill changes as we age. We may find we don't remember names as easily or that we have more trouble concentrating in busy settings.</b></p> <p><b>Next, we are going to talk about changes that are not normal and may be signs or symptoms of something significant.</b></p>

### Part 5 of 12 – 10 Early Signs and Symptoms

	4 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 2)
	<p><b>Say: There are 10 early signs and symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.</b> Let participants know the 10 signs are found in their Dementia Friends Session workbook (page 2). Read the bolded statement below one at a time. Say or paraphrase the additional information following each statement. Next read the typical age-related changes found in bold italics. Go through the list one at a time.</p> <p><b>1. The first sign is memory loss that disrupts daily life.</b> One of the most common signs of Alzheimer’s is memory loss, especially forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events; asking for the same information over and over; relying on memory aides (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own. <b><i>What's typical with normal aging?</i></b> <b><i>Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.</i></b></p> <p><b>2. The second sign is challenges in planning or solving problems.</b> Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before. <b><i>What's typical with normal aging?</i></b> <b><i>Occasionally making errors when balancing a checkbook.</i></b></p>

**3. The third sign is difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.**

People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes, people may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***On occasion, needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.***

**4. The fourth sign is confusion with time or place.**

People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Getting confused about the day of the week, but recalling it later.***

**5. The fifth sign is trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.**

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer's. They may have difficulty reading, judging distance and determining color or contrast, which may cause problems with driving.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Vision changes related to cataracts.***

**6. The sixth sign is new problems with words in speaking or writing.**

People with Alzheimer's may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have problems finding the right word or call things by the wrong name (e.g., calling a watch a "hand clock").

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.***

**7. The seventh sign is misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.**

A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometimes, they may accuse others of stealing. This may occur more frequently over time.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control, and retracing steps to find them.***

**8. The eighth sign is decreased or poor judgment.**

People with Alzheimer's may experience changes in judgment or decision making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Making a bad decision once in a while.***

**9. The ninth sign is withdrawal from work or social activities.**

A person with Alzheimer's may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby like sewing or quilting. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.***

**10. The tenth sign is changes in mood and personality.**




The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer's can change. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends or in places where they are out of their comfort zone.

***What's typical with normal aging?***

***Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.***

***Source: 10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's***  
[www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp](http://www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp)

Part 6 of 12 – Broken Sentences Worksheet and Five Key Messages

	<p>7 minutes</p>
	<p>Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 3)          Pen/pencil          Optional: View Five Key Messages video found at:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed">https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed</a></p>
	<p>Direct individuals to their materials and ask them to turn to the Broken Sentences Worksheet.</p> <p><b>Say: This activity will help you better understand dementia and you will learn the five key messages. Match the sentences in Column 1 to Column 2 by drawing a line from each sentence start to the corresponding sentence end. You should have five sentences that make sense. This is not a test, just a way to understand the five key messages.</b></p> <p>Encourage participants to complete the worksheet together by forming pairs or small groups. When all have finished, go through the answers one by one.</p> <p>Say the first part of the sentence listed under Column 1 and ask a volunteer or the group to share what they identified as the response from Column 2. If they are wrong, ask for others to volunteer until the correct match is found. If they are correct repeat the sentence as indicated below. Say or paraphrase the additional information as you have time. Note: the additional information is not found in the participant materials.</p> <p>The complete sentences and expanded statements follow:</p> <p>Read</p> <p>1. <b>Dementia is not</b> (pause and wait for a response). Response: <b>a normal part of aging. <u>This is our first key message.</u></b></p> <p><b>Ask: What do you think we mean by this?</b></p> <p><b>Say/Paraphrase:</b> It is true that dementia is more common among people over 65, however not everyone who grows old develops dementia. Some of us may become more forgetful as we get older or during times of stress or illness but dementia is a different type of forgetfulness. Memory loss will be more noticeable, and may be accompanied by mood changes and confusion. It's important to ask a doctor to check out any unusual symptoms because they may be treatable.</p>



2. **Dementia is caused by** (pause and wait for a response). Response: **diseases of the brain. This is our second key message.**

**Ask: Does anyone know the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's disease?**

**Say/Paraphrase:** Dementia is the name for a collection of symptoms that include memory loss, mood changes and problems with communication and reasoning. These symptoms are brought about by a number of diseases that cause changes in the brain. The most common is Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's changes the chemistry and structure of the brain, causing the brain cells to die off.

3. **Dementia is not just** (pause and wait for a response). Response: **about having memory problems. This is our third key message.**

**Say/Paraphrase:** People often think of dementia as a form of memory loss. Although memory loss is often one of the first signs of dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease, it's much more than that. Dementia can affect the way people think, speak and do things. Dementia makes it harder to plan and learn new activities, and interferes with structured tasks like writing. It can also make it harder to communicate. However, there is much that can be done to help. Every year we understand more about dementia and develop new strategies that can help to boost someone's confidence and maintain their independence for as long as possible.


4. **It is possible to have a** (pause and wait for a response). Response: **good quality of life with dementia. This is our fourth key message.**

**Say/Paraphrase:** Most of us have an image in our mind of what life with dementia looks like. That image is often very bleak. So, it can be very surprising to learn that many people with dementia continue to drive, socialize and hold down jobs. Even as dementia progresses, many people lead active, healthy lives, continue their hobbies, and enjoy friendships and relationships. Of course, dementia does make it harder to do certain things but with the right support and know-how, it is possible for someone with dementia to get the very best out of life.




5. **There's more to the person than** (pause and wait for a response). Response: **the dementia. This is our fifth key message.**

**Say/Paraphrase:** In the same way that we would look at someone with diabetes or cancer and see them as a person first, people living with dementia are also a person first.

Optional: View Five Key Messages video to reinforce the Five Key Messages.

	<p><b>Say:</b> At the end of today’s session, I will ask you to think about what you can do differently in your day-to-day life that may help people affected by dementia. Remember that dementia can have an impact on a whole family, not only the person who has the disease.</p> <p>To help your thinking, some actions others have committed to are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you know someone in your community who has dementia or whose family member has dementia, ask if there is anything you could do to help – maybe cook with them or simply visit.</li> <li>• If the person ahead of you in a shop is struggling with simple tasks, be patient.</li> <li>• Tell someone about what you have learned about dementia and encourage them to become a Dementia Friend.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Champion tip:</b> Repeat each sentence to the audience to ensure everyone has heard it. This activity can be completed as a large group or in small groups.</p>

**Part 7 of 12 – The River (a Story of Dementia)**

	<p>5 minutes</p>
	<p>Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 4) Optional: View The River (a Story of Dementia) video found at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed">https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed</a></p>
	<p><b>Say:</b> As noted before, dementia is caused by a disease that damages brain cells. This damage interferes with how brain cells communicate with each other. When brain cells cannot communicate, a person’s thinking, behavior and feelings can be affected.</p> <p>The brain has many different areas and each one is responsible for different functions (for example, memory, judgment and movement). When cells in an area of the brain are damaged, that area cannot function effectively.</p> <p>The following story is a good way to illustrate how dementia might affect a person.</p> <p>Let participants know you are reading page 4 of the Session Workbook if they would like to follow along.</p> <p>Optional: View The River (a Story of Dementia) video found at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed">https://www.youtube.com/user/ACTonALZ/feed</a></p>

**Champion tip:**

*Champion should read the following story aloud. Do not ask for volunteers to read or assign reading. It is best not to assume those in the Information Session can read and can read well.*

**Say: For every human being, life is like a river. The constant flow of water represents our daily experiences—from routine and familiar to those that take us by surprise. If we are lucky enough to live a long life, we will experience the river in each of the four seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter.**

**Spring is early childhood, when the river is new to us and we are just learning about all the fish, birds, and animals that connect with it. Summer is our experience from childhood to adulthood, when we transition from relying on others to navigating the water and harvesting for ourselves. Fall is adulthood, when we know the river and its resources and dangers well enough to provide for others, raise children, and chart our own course in the world. Winter is elderhood, when we have acquired the deepest knowledge and wisdom, but also start to experience changes from the aging of our bodies.**

**Dementia is like a brutal blizzard. Blizzards can come in any season, although they are most common and most severe in winter. The wind and snow mute the sight and sound of the water. Everyday experiences—the natural flow of the water—become harder to appreciate and navigate. Thinking activities that used to be easy, like planning a fishing trip, buying bait, planning meals for the day, and reaching out to others to join the activity, become increasingly difficult.**

**However, even at the onset of the blizzard, emotional experiences and feelings remain strong—the love of fishing, the memory of the sunlight gleaming off the rippling current, and the joy of company, for example.**

**The progression of dementia is like experiencing a growing blizzard without end. The prolonged exposure to cold starts to freeze the river. The everyday flow of experiences beneath the surface is increasingly difficult to reach and navigate without help. Eventually, even deep and lifelong emotional and spiritual connections are harder to access through the thickening ice.**

**This analogy of a river in a blizzard helps explain the experience of dementia and the different stages. As a person moves through each stage his or her facts, recent memory, and complex thinking become hard to reach in the ice.**

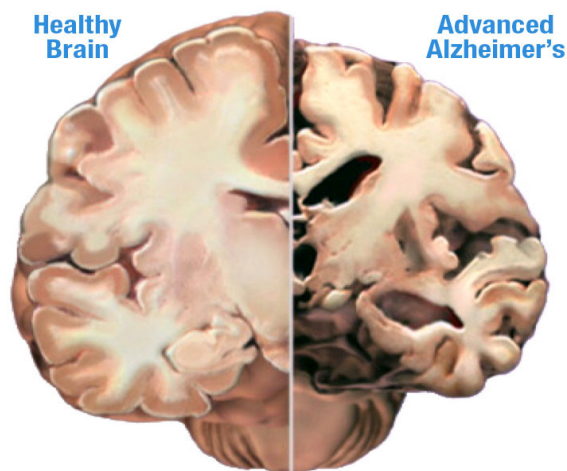
**Eventually, emotions and feelings can be affected as well. However, those emotional memories still flowing underneath can remind us of safe and happy times. We can all play a part in helping someone feel those happy experiences.**

**As part of becoming a Dementia Friend, being patient and present in the moment is important when someone needs extra time to express their emotions and feelings. There is more to the person than dementia and we can help them to live well.**

**The brain stores both recent and past memories. For people with dementia, the most recent memories are lost first; the memories from earlier in life are remembered longer.**

**It's important to remember that dementia affects each person differently.**

Let participants know that a side-by-side image of a healthy brain and a brain with advanced Alzheimer's can be found in their Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 5).



***Context for The River (a Story of Dementia):***

As part of the community engagement process for becoming dementia friendly, community members are interviewed about perceived strengths and gaps in their community. In 2018 when Native Americans<sup>2</sup> were interviewed and when their ally organizations hosted Dementia Friends Information Sessions, it became clear that the Bookcase Story (found in the Information Session) about how dementia progresses lacked cultural identity for Native Americans. Using a culturally appropriate story on memory loss was one solution. The language,

<sup>2</sup> Although Native American is used to name the intended Dementia Friends audience, it's important to note other culturally preferred names, including American Indians, First Nations, Indigenous, and Natives. Tribes have unique languages, cultures, traditions, and viewpoints, so it's helpful to connect with the local tribe before delivering an Information Session.

style, and use of symbolism would need to reflect the oral traditions of Native American culture.

What follows is background for understanding The River story.<sup>3</sup>

For many indigenous cultures, the cycle of life is represented in four seasons, four directions, and four life stages (child, young person, adult, and elder). Many tribal cultures use a Medicine Wheel to image and symbolize this understanding.

- Yellow represents: East, Child and Spring
- Red represents: South, Youth and Summer
- Black represents: West, Adult and Fall
- White represents: North, Elder, Wind and Winter



*Note: Other things can be used with the Medicine Wheel, such as elements of nature, animals, ceremonial plants and aspects of life.*




Here's how the Medicine Wheel applies to The River story:

- Paragraph one connects the four seasons and the four stages of life to the flow and experiences of a river.
- In paragraph two, the author describes dementia as a “brutal blizzard.” Within the Medicine Wheel, a blizzard falls within the white section, which represents the elder stage of life. For a “brutal blizzard,” imagine a fierce wind, being unable to hear, freezing cold temperatures, and not being able to see too far ahead because the snow is blinding. The word “brutal” reflects the straightforward style of communication common among many Native American traditions and avoids “sugar coating” important aspects of life. This paragraph captures the struggle of dementia and the way things used to be.
- Paragraph three describes “experiencing a growing blizzard without end,” reflecting how difficult it is to navigate the storm and how the prolonged exposure begins to take its toll.

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<sup>3</sup> The River was written by Dr. Anton (Waagosh) Treuer, Professor of Ojibwe, Bemidji State University. In Dementia Friends Information Sessions that include Native American participants, use The River story as a replacement for the Bookcase story. Dr. Treuer developed The River by applying a Native American cultural analogy to the topic of dementia.

### Part 8 of 12 – Everyday Tasks

	<p>12 minutes</p>
	<p>Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 5) Pen/pencil</p>
	<p><b>Say: As we just learned, that thinking and planning are used to carry out everyday activities.</b></p> <p><b>Next I'd like for you to work in pairs or groups and write a step-by-step instruction list to complete a task you do daily or often.</b></p> <p>Assign one of the following tasks to the group: brush your teeth or make a sandwich.</p> <p><b>Make sure that someone reading your list could follow the instructions successfully to complete the task.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer participants to the Everyday Tasks page in the Session Workbook to write their list. Ask the participants to number each step as they go.</li> <li>• Give the group five minutes to write down the steps that are needed to complete the task. If any of the pairs are not finished after five minutes, stop them and move on. Ask anyone who has not finished to estimate how many more steps they would need and make note of that number.</li> <li>• After five minutes ask each pair or group to share how many steps they had for the activity. Keep note of how many steps each group had.</li> <li>• Ask the participants if anyone would like to share their first step. Then ask everyone if they think a step comes before this.</li> <li>• Ask the participants if anyone would like to share their last step. Then ask everyone if they think a step comes after this.</li> </ul>

**Question to participants:** Did you combine different actions? Could you break them down further?

**Response:** It's easy to combine lots of actions into one step.

**Everyone - look at your instruction list again.**

**Question:** Have you missed any steps?

**Question:** Could any steps be broken down into smaller steps?

**Question:** How many truly individual steps do you think it would take?

Bring the group to the conclusion that the complete list would be very long.

Next facilitate a group discussion using some of the following questions:

**Ask: When you think about functions controlled by the brain, what is required to complete this task?**

Responses may include: breathing, heart function, movement, vision, hearing, coordination, sequencing, memory of what words mean.

**Ask:**

- **If someone with dementia is struggling with this task, what could be done to support them? If the person is supported to complete the task, how might they feel as a result?**
- **What did you learn from this activity?**

Summarize the activity by saying or paraphrasing the following:

- **Most people take simple day-to-day tasks for granted, but when you actually break the task down, it is actually very complex, we each perform hundreds of tiny steps to make something happen.**
- **For someone with dementia who has problems with planning, decision making, communication and remembering, any one of these steps can become difficult.**
- **However, with support it is possible for them to continue to perform these tasks.**
- **If we can identify the steps the person is struggling with and help them with that, we can empower them to be more independent.**






**Champion tips:**

- *Speak with host in advance to determine a task that is relevant to the group.*
- *Ask less questions of the group or gather responses from only a few groups if you are running short on time.*
- *You can ask the group to do this activity verbally and create the list as a whole group. You can also ask the group, "What is the first step?" and*

	<p>then write down on a board, flipchart or paper. Continue until you have a whole list, and then ask the exploring questions from above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternatively, you can ask people to work in groups of three so that two people think of the steps and one person counts on their fingers.</li> </ul>
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**Part 9 of 12 – Communication**

	10 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 6) Clock or watch with second hand for 20 second activity
	<p><b>Say: The ability to exchange ideas, wishes and feelings is a basic need! Communication with a person with dementia requires patience, understanding and good listening skills.</b></p> <p><b>When we talked about the Bookcase Story we talked about how a person might feel as the changes with dementia continue to affect thinking. One of the skills that may be greatly changed is the ability to communicate—both expressing needs and understanding what others are asking. As we now talk about communication, keep in mind how the person might feel.</b></p> <p><b>Changes in the ability to communicate are unique to each person with Alzheimer’s and can include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using familiar words repeatedly.</li> <li>• Inventing new words to describe familiar objects.</li> <li>• Easily losing his or her train of thought.</li> <li>• Reverting to a first (or birth) language.</li> <li>• Having difficulty organizing words logically.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ongoing communication is important, no matter how difficult it may become or how confused the person with Alzheimer's or dementia may appear.</b></p> <p><b>You might notice that the person is more easily confused. They might not respond to what you are saying or asking. Or they may respond by pushing you away, crying or making sounds. Sometimes we call these responses “behaviors.” But, often they are simply a form of communication. If the</b></p>



**person can no longer tell you it hurts to put her arms over her head to put on a shirt, she may push you away. If everyone is moving quickly and it is loud in the room he may not be able tell you to slow down, he may cry.**

**Use the following tips when communicating with a person with dementia.**

Say the bolded words below and additional information on communication. Let participants know the information can be found in the Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 5).

**Treat the person with dignity and respect.** Avoid talking past the person as if he or she isn't there.

**Be aware of your feelings.** Your tone of voice may communicate your attitude. Use positive, friendly facial expressions.

**Be patient and supportive.** Let the person know that you are listening and trying to understand. Show that you care about what he or she is saying and be careful not to interrupt.

**Say: People with dementia may have difficulty communicating if we move or talk too quickly. It may take the person up to 20 seconds to take in what you have said and get out their response. Here is how long that is. Let's time 20 seconds.**



*Note: Using a watch or clock the Champion lets the group know when 20 seconds has passed.*

**Ask: How did that feel?** Allow audience to answer. Repeat the words shared. Common feelings and words may be: uncomfortable, too long, anxious, nervous.

**This gives us an example of how long that is and that we need to allow extra time to allow someone with dementia to communicate.**

**If someone is having trouble communicating:**

**Offer comfort and reassurance.** Reassure them that it's okay and encourage the person to continue.

**Avoid criticizing or correcting.** Don't tell the person what he or she is saying is incorrect. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what is being said.

**Avoid arguing.** If the person says something you don't agree with, let it be. Arguing usually only makes things worse and often increases agitation for the person with dementia.

**Offer a guess.** If the person uses the wrong word or cannot find a word, try guessing the right word. If you understand what the person means, finding the right word may not be necessary.

**Encourage nonverbal communication.** If you don't understand what is being said, ask the person to point or gesture.

Let participants know the following conversation tips are found in the Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 7).




**Say: When approaching the person and starting a conversation:**

- **Come from the front, identify yourself, and keep good eye contact. If the person isn't standing, go down to that level.**
- **Call the person by their preferred name to get his or her attention.**
- **Use short, simple phrases and repeat information as needed. Ask one question at a time.**
- **Speak slowly and clearly. Use a gentle and relaxed tone.**
- **Patiently wait for a response while the person takes time to process what you said.**




**During the conversation:**


- **Provide a statement rather than ask a question. For example, say "The bathroom is right here," instead of asking, "Do you need to use the bathroom?"**
- **Avoid vague statements about something you want the person to do. Speak directly: "Please come here. Your lunch is ready." Name an object or place. Rather than "Here it is" say "Here is your hat."**
- **Turn negatives into positives. Instead of saying, "Don't go there," say, "Let's go here."**
- **Give visual cues. Point or touch the item you want the person to use or begin the task for him or her.**
- **Avoid quizzing. Reminiscing may be healthy, but avoid asking, "Do you remember when?"**
- **Try using written notes or pictures as reminders if the person is able to understand them.**

## Part 10 of 12 – Review the Five Key Messages





	2 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 8)
	<p>Next review the five key messages.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> <b>We learned the five key messages in the Broken Sentences activity. Who can remember them?</b></p> <p>Ask for volunteers to share the five key messages. Repeat each correct message that they say and remind them the five key messages are in their workbook. The messages are listed below for your reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dementia is not a normal part of aging.</b></li><li>• <b>Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.</b></li><li>• <b>Dementia is not just about having memory problems.</b></li><li>• <b>It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.</b></li><li>• <b>There's more to the person than the dementia.</b></li></ul>

Part 11 of 12 – Turn Your Understanding into Action

	<p>8 minutes</p>
	<p>Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 8)  Dementia Friends Action Slip (optional)  Dementia Friend Pin (optional)  Pen/pencil</p>
	<p><b>Note:</b> This activity may take a little longer for the group to fully understand what is being asked. It may be a new concept for people. They may feel they are being asked to volunteer or to take on a heavy commitment, so it is important to stress that a small action is enough. If you have examples from previous sessions, share them.</p> <p><b>Say:</b> Let’s take what we’ve learned today and put it into action.  <b>Say:</b> What does “dementia-friendly” mean to you?  Take a few suggestions from the group.</p> <p><b>Say:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with dementia can become isolated if those of us around them don’t understand what they are going through.</li> <li>• We can reduce isolation and help people with dementia feel welcomed and supported in their community.</li> <li>• How can we do this? You can become a Dementia Friend and turn what you have learned today into a dementia-friendly action.</li> </ul> <p><b>Say:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become a Dementia Friend, you need to support the five key messages and commit to your own dementia-friendly action.</li> <li>• No action is too big or too small - every action will make a difference.</li> </ul> <p><b>Here are some example actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will stay in touch with someone I know living with dementia.</li> <li>• I will change how I talk about dementia by saying “living with dementia” rather than “suffering with dementia.”</li> <li>• I will smile and say hello instead of avoiding a person with dementia.</li> <li>• I will start a conversation at work, at my child’s soccer game or with my faith community about Dementia Friends and how to become one.</li> </ul> <p><b>Say:</b> Now discuss the action you’ll choose to do after today with the person next to you (or group). Record your action in your materials so you can take it with you.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the group 5 minutes to discuss their actions and then bring the group back together.</li> <li>• Ask if anyone from the group would like to share their action.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Champion tip:</b>  <i>Distributing an action slip is optional if you are interested in documenting the actions Dementia Friends have committed to.</i>  <i>Providing a Dementia Friend pin is optional. Log in as a Champion for information on how to purchase buttons visit <a href="http://www.actonalz.org/dementia-friends">http://www.actonalz.org/dementia-friends</a></i></p>

### Part 12 of 12 – Resources in Your Community / Conclusion

	2 minutes
	Dementia Friends Information Session Workbook (page 8) Brochure or bookmark listing community resources (if available)
	<p>Conclude with letting people know about community resources.</p> <p><b>Say: To learn more about resources in your community contact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline</b> (800.272.3900) serves people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals, general public, diverse populations, and concerned friends and family, and provides referrals to local community programs and services, dementia-related education, crisis assistance and emotional support. <a href="http://alz.org">http://alz.org</a></li> </ul> <p>Thank participants for their time and for becoming a Dementia Friend!</p>
	<p><b>Champion tip:</b>  <i>Take individual or group photos of participants holding the We Are Dementia Friends and I am a Dementia Friend signs to post on your organization’s website or Facebook page. Report the number of Dementia Friends made into the on-line form on the ACT website.</i></p>